India - Japan Cultural Distance on the *Mottainai* Ethics

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Abstract

The mottainai ethics was originally based on one's modesty and subjective ideals respecting the virtues of thrift, moderation and self-realization. This paper aims to shed light on a dimension of cultural or perception gap between the Japanese and the Indian people, mainly referring to the concept of mottainai in the Japanese language. This research uses an analytic induction framework of qualitative and narrative type analysis based on a strategy of collecting data through relatively unstructured interviews with the Japanese expatriates who manage joint-ventures in India. We find those Japanese expatriates feel that the Indian business persons and workers are less concerned in their business hours to train and enhance themselves so as to deserve an object or resource for making their quality of life better. This perception gap on wastefulness or opportunity loss in business may create a potential mutual mind barrier to entry.

Keywords:

India, Inefficiency, Japan, Mottainai, Perception gap

Ritsumeikan International Affairs Vol.15, pp.1-18 (2017).

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a whole, the improvement in access, an effective regulatory environment after the 1991 reforms, and the capabilities of a modern market economy have greatly lowered the barriers of entry into business in India (Nilekani, 2008). The market has been opened up to anyone with the talent and energy to take advantage of it. Despite this, the Japanese did not so actively take it as they did in China, NIEs and ASEAN countries. Table 1 shows Japan's outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) on flow basis towards China, NIEs, ASEAN 4, Vietnam and India. Table 2 shows the trend on outstanding balance basis.

Table 1: Japan's outbound FDI (on flow basis) in Asia (unit: US$ million)

	2003	2011	2012	2013
China	3,980	12,649	13,479	9,104
NIEs	31	9,302	8,043	8,955
ASEAN 4	773	13,204	6,397	16,587
Vietnam	230	1,859	2,570	3,266
India	124	2,326	2,802	2,155
Asia Total	5.028	39,492	33,477	40,470

(Source: JETRO statistics)

Table 2: Japan's outbound FDI (outstanding balance) in Asia (unit: US$ million)

	End of 2003	End of 2010	End of 2011	End of 2012
China	15,296	66,478	83,379	93,215
NIEs	24,934	68,438	78,577	93,373
ASEAN 4	21,507	58,394	72,431	77,159
Vietnam	n.a.	4,501	6,370	8,415
India	1,507	13,558	15,416	15,107
Asia Total	64,267	212,708	257,755	288,923

(Source: JETRO statistics)

What holds the Japanese firms back? Though many researchers and practitioners refer to the cultural or perception gap between the two societies as a reason to this, less has been done to investigate upon the specificities of the gap. This paper aims to shed light on the dimension of cultural or perception gap, mainly referring to the concept of *mottainai* in the

Japanese language. The *mottainai* ethics was originally based on one's modesty and subjective ideals respecting the virtues of thrift, moderation and self-realization. Late Professor Wangari Maathai, Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel Prize winner, was well known as a promoter of *mottainai* as an environmental protection concept. When she visited Japan for an event related to the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, she was given a shirt with the word 'MOTTAINAI' written on it. She wore that shirt at the Kyoto Protocol conferences and asked the audience to use the word in their everyday life. She became a widely recognized celebrity particularly in Japan for this.

We hypothesize that there exists a gap in each subjective ideals for restraining from wasteful expenditures between the Indian and the Japanese people, which may discourage the Japanese firms to invest in India. In section 2, we overview the *mottainai* ethics. In section 3, we develop a theoretical framework based on western traditions of institutional economics and socio-economic philosophy for setting forth the foundation for proving our hypothesis. Then, in section 4, this research uses an analytic induction framework of qualitative and narrative type analysis based on a strategy of collecting data through relatively unstructured interviews with the Japanese expatriates who manage joint-ventures in India by adopting a framework of small-N research design. We attempt to point out that the perception gap on 'wastefulness' or 'inefficiency' between India and Japan should be recognized as a mutual barrier of mindsets to entry and to overcome a cultural gap for strengthening economic relations. Section 5 puts concluding comments.

2. 'Mottainai' ethics on consumption

Late Professor Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize awardee, was an environmentalist, a civil society and women's rights activist and the founder of the Green Belt Movement. 'MOTTAINAI' Campaign - to shape sustainable and cyclical society on a global scale by promoting to make the most of the limited resources and using them as efficiently as possible, as represented by the '3Rs': to 'reduce' waste, 'reuse' finite resources, and 'recycle' what we can -. When she visited Japan in February 2005, She came across with the Japanese word of *mottainai*. She had deep respect for it, and propounded to spread *mottainai* around the world as a

common keyword for conserving environment (Mottainai Home, 2012).

Mottainai（もったいない、勿体無い）is a Japanese term meaning "a sense of regret concerning waste when the intrinsic value of an object or resource is not properly utilized" (Mottainai Home, 2012). The expression "*Mottainai*!" can be uttered alone as an exclamation when something useful, such as food or time, is wasted, roughly meaning "Oh, what a waste!" In addition to its primary sense of 'wasteful', the word is also used to mean "impious; irreverent" or "more than one deserves".

It is suggestive that this word seems to have these two different meanings i.e. "what a waste!" and "more than one deserves!". This shows a dimension of traditional Japanese ethics on consumption. On the one hand, *before* the Japanese buy an object (when the goods have not yet been owned by them), they check with modesty whether they deserve the goods or not. If they find (or they think that they should find) another inexpensive one which they think they deserve, they think of the first goods as "*mottainai*!" meaning "more than one deserves!". On the other hand, *after* they bought an object (when the goods has already been owned by them), they check with modesty whether they still deserve the goods or not. If they throw away the goods which they think they still deserve, they think of the action of throwing it away as "*mottainai*!" meaning "what a waste!". An anonymous writer in Mottainai Wikipedia (2012) says that "*Mottainai* in Japanese refers to far more than just physical waste (resources). It can refer to wasted and wasteful efforts and actions, activities, time, souls, talents, emotion, minds, dreams, and potential. It is even used to refer to thought patterns that give rise to wasteful action". If he/she does not make efforts to fully utilize his/her capacity or ability, the underutilized capacity or ability (and their behaviours) would be construed as *mottainai*.

In parallel, we should note the recent trend in encouraging Japanese people to quantify the objective, at least, *objectifiable* value of all the goods and services so that they may not pay more than the value they consume - the so-called '*financialization*' named by Ronald Dore, a famous Japanologist - has unwisely changed the criteria for *mottainai* in Japan (see also Dore, 2011). When the Japanese feel that the ostensible value of goods does not deserve the offered 'price', they use *mottainai* to just mean: "this is too expensive!". Here, we should note that they seem to have replaced *themselves* (modesty) with *the market price* as the criteria for judging whether each consumption can be construed as *mottainai* or not. In other

words, though they used to be 'spiritual seekers' who would buy modest goods and would train themselves (*kokki*) to deserve the goods, they now have become merely 'utility maximizers' as *homo-economicus* based on the market price in accordance with the tread of *financialization*.

Despite the above mentioned trend, in our view, the word *mottainai* shows a dimension of traditional Japanese ethics on pre-consumption as well as post-consumption. In the pre-consumption, they were disciplined to buy modest goods, as if they thought that they were not yet worthy of luxurious goods, respecting the virtue of thrift. In the post-consumption, they were disciplined to use their owned goods as long as they could, and in doing so they tried to become worthy of the owned goods - respecting the virtue of thrift. This ethics on consumption was underpinned by the virtue of modesty and self-realization. It is said that in the ancient Japanese, *mottainai* had various meanings, including a sense of gratitude mixed with 'shame' for receiving greater favour from a superior than is properly merited by one's station in life. *Mottainai* is a compound word, *mottai* plus *nai*. *Mottai* refers to the intrinsic dignity or sacredness of a material entity, while *nai* indicates an absence or lack. The term *mottainai* was traditionally used by Buddhists to indicate regret at the waste or misuse of something sacred or highly respected such as religious objects or teaching. Today, the word is widely used in everyday life to indicate the waste of any material object, time, or other resource.

It is worth noting that there are similar words and wisdom as *mottainai* in other Asian countries and languages; '*mubazir*' or '*eman-eman*' in the Javanese / Indonesian culture, '*opocoi*' in Bengali, '*aeytadal*' in Urdu and '*mitbyayita'* in Hindi. In most societies, we can see similar *ethos* of economic agents respecting the virtue of thrift (referring to something that if not fully utilized will be a waste), the virtue of accepting the present as it is *enough* (not exceeding their own bounds), the virtue of moderation and the virtue of sharing goods among the members.

How has the virtue of *mottainai* been spread in Japan? Yasuo Yuasa (1925-2005) was a Japanese philosopher and was known as a pioneer who conducted a path-breaking work that compared the business ethics embedded in the Western capitalism and the Japanese capitalism to find different *ethos*, in Weber's term, required for the evolution of each mode of production and redistribution. According to Yuasa (1967), in the feudal mode of production, people attached the highest value to agriculture. He

pointed out that in the typical closed and self-sufficient feudal economy, the basic *ethos* of economic agents was to respect the virtue of accepting the present as it is *enough* (not exceeding their own bounds) and sharing goods among the members – *Chisoku-Anbun*. Concretely, the virtue of 'thrift' in the dimension of 'consumption' and the virtue of 'charity' in the dimension of 'redistribution' were the most respected in the economy. The feudal mode is characterized by the need to operate much larger agricultural areas with sparse population. Since the productivity of agriculture was subject to natural conditions, no other response was effective except the passive response to the scarcity of goods through thrift in consumption and charity in redistribution.

In the Middle Ages, people in Japan had a strong sense of ethics believing that the real meaning of human life lies in religious salvation and the ancillary meaning of life derived from the economic benefits (Yuasa, 1967; Yuasa *et al.* 1989). The virtue of thrift and charity, in Japan, may have been fostered even among the commoners in the eighteenth century, through the commoner schools that were usually grouped together as 'parish' or 'temple' schools (*terakoya*) and village schools (*go-ko*) schools. Jansen (2000) reports that these schools proliferated - 47 *terakoya* were established between 1751 and 1788, 1,286 were established between 1789 and 1829, and 8,675 were established between 1830 and 1867. Robert Bellah (1985) shows how the native doctrines of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism encouraged forms of logic and understanding necessary for Japan's economic development.

3. VEBLEN'S INSIGHT ON CONSUMPTION AND THE MECHANISM OF ENVY-AVOIDANCE

Let us further consider the ethics on consumption while referring to the contributions by Western economic philosophy. One says, particularly as part of management stream, that we should take care of overspending or we should acquire the skill of evaluating the real value of goods and services, so that we may not pay more than the real value we consume. The other aspect says that we should avoid *conspicuous* consumption and should not exceed our own bounds (we should abstain from buying lavish food and luxurious goods). However, another perspective says that it is completely at one's discretion to decide how we consume within the in-

comes earned upon our own talents and efforts. It is not easy to draw a clear demarcation between necessary consumption and wasteful or dissipated consumption. However, we feel that there should exist the demarcation such that the consumption function C is composed of basic or necessary consumption and wasteful or dissipated consumption.

Though we would say that no consumer, in general, would be willing to accept wasteful consumption, we have to admit that we occasionally enjoy conspicuous consumption and occasionally regret that type of consumption as it is considered wasteful later. Furthermore, we occasionally accuse others of conspicuous consumption. This reminds us of classical Institutionalist's view on conspicuous consumption. Thorstein B. Veblen (1857-1929), one of the founders of classical Institutional Economics, in his celebrated book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, talks about the concept of 'conspicuous waste' and says;

> Whatever form of expenditure the consumer chooses, or whatever end he seeks in making his choice, has utility to him by virtue of his preference. As seen from the point of view of the individual consumer, the question of wastefulness does not arise within the scope of economic theory proper. The use of the word 'waste' as a technical term, therefore, implies no deprecation of the motives or of the ends sought by the consumer under this canon of conspicuous waste. But it is, on other grounds, worth noting that the term 'waste' in the language of everyday life implies deprecation of what is characterized as wasteful (Veblen, 2005: 41).

Generally speaking, no one would prefer to make any wasteful consumption which does not serve human well-being as the whole. However, as Veblen (2005) pointed out, it is intrinsically difficult to differentiate necessary consumption from a wasteful one.

> It frequently happens that an element of the standard of living which set out with being primarily wasteful, ends with becoming, in the apprehension of the consumer, a necessity of life; and it may in this way become as indispensable as any other item of the consumer's habitual expenditure. As items which sometimes fall under this head, and are therefore available as illustrations of the manner in which this princi-

> ple applies, may be cited carpets and tapestries, silver table service, waiter's services, silk hats, starched linen, many articles of jewellery and of dress. The indispensability of these things after the habit and the convention have been formed, however, has little to say in the classification of expenditure as waste or not waste in the technical meaning of the word. ... It is obviously not necessary that a given object of expenditure should be exclusively wasteful in order to come in under the category of conspicuous waste. An article may be useful and wasteful both, and its utility to the consumer may be made up of use and waste in the most varying proportions (Veblen, 2005: 41-2).

Everyone would rather not pay for conspicuous consumption if one feels that it is definitely wasteful. However, it is extremely difficult to draw a clear objective demarcation between useful consumption and conspicuous waste. This is why we would say that the demarcation finally depends on each individual's subjective ideals. Accordingly, the improvement of our quality of life depends on how the individual's subjective ideals are sought and compromised in society. In this context, we have to look at the structure and principles in our behaviour of abstaining from conspicuous consumption in society. It is at one's discretion to judge which consumption, at the individual level, is wasteful or not. At the same time, it appears that we monitor others' behaviour in consumption by occasionally accusing them of lavish and conspicuous consumption if the conspicuousness is considered harmful to society.

Jon Elster, an influential Norwegian social and political theorist, points out in his book, *The Cement of Society*, several features of 'envy', including the mechanism of 'envy-avoidance'. The first urge of envy is not "I want what he has", but "I want him not to have what he has, because it makes me feel that I am less" (Elster, 1989: 253).

> I may give to assuage the feeling of guilt that your envy causes me to have. I might even abstain from becoming superior in the first place, to prevent any envy from arising. ... The social consequences of the private vice of envy depend on the reactions of the envied or potentially envied to the fact of envy. Envy-avoidance is closely related to witchcraft and, especially, to accusations of witchcraft. In many societies, successful people have been branded as witches (Elster, 1989: 259).

According to Elster, successful people would rather not get too rich (or would donate their wealth to the poor) by the fear that they will be too envied, while the poor would try to prevent from getting too poor by the fear that they may be provoked into witchcraft (Elster, 1989: 261). Elster asserts that egalitarian society results from a combination of envy and altruism, with the latter in turn being largely the effect of envy-avoidance (Elster, 1989: 261). Envy and envy-avoidance function as the glue and cement of binding people in society.

According to John Rawls, one of the most influential contemporary political philosophers, a rational individual under his (Rawlsian) ideal society is not subject to envy, at least when the differences between himself and others are not thought to be the result of injustice and do not exceed certain limits (Rawls, 1971: 532). Rawls follows Kant's definition of envy as "one of the vices of hating mankind" (Rawls, 1971: 532), which is collectively disadvantageous: the individual who envies another is prepared to do things that may not be in the interest of both. Rawls argues that a well-ordered society is unlikely to give rise to feelings of envy, partly because material inequalities are likely to be relatively small (Elster, 1989: 253). However, we do not always live in a well-ordered society. To a certain extent the mechanism of envy-avoidance may have created a particular ethics on consumption while binding people in society.

Does the behaviour on the *mottainai* ethics also result from a dimension of the above mentioned envy-avoidance mechanism in which successful people would rather not get too rich (would abstain from buying luxurious goods) by the fear that they will be too envied? The tendency to seek the levelling down equality (also to respect altruistic behaviours in others) in the seemingly *telic* (teleological) [1] egalitarian society often referred to as a social feature of Japan may be related to the mechanism of envy-avoidance. Nevertheless, as was mentioned earlier, we should recall that the term of *mottainai* was traditionally used by Buddhists to indicate regret at the waste or misuse of something sacred or highly respected[2] . It

1） It is worth noting a distinction between what Derek Parfit (1991) has called teleological (*telic*) and deontological (*deontic*) egalitarianism. Telic egalitarians think inequality is in itself (or intrinsically) bad. Deontic egalitarians do not. For, unlike telic egalitarians, deontic ones would seem to have no objection to natural inequalities or to inequalities between people living in different communities that do not interact with one another.

2） It is reported that one of the earliest appearances of the word *mottainai* was in

seems that the behaviour of *mottainai* was more related to their subjective ideal or belief in the Buddha's teaching for training themselves (*kokki*) to have religious enlightenment.

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK: INTERVIEWS ON JAPANESE EXPATRIATES WHO MANAGE JOINT-VENTURES IN INDIA

The theoretical dimensions from the survey of literature help us build our hypothesis. This is also supported by the proposition of Pranab Bardhan, an influential Indian economist, who states that neither inefficiency nor inequality can attract foreign investors (Bardhan, n.a.). Further, we hypothesize that there exists a perception gap in each subjective ideal for restraining from wasteful expenditures between the Indian and the Japanese people, which may discourage the Japanese firms to invest in India. In order to grasp the perception gap on wastefulness or inefficiency between India and Japan as a potential mutual barrier of mindsets to entry, this research uses an analytic induction framework of qualitative and narrative type analysis upon a strategy of collecting data through relatively unstructured interview by adopting *small-N* research designs. Analytic induction begins with (1) a rough definition of a research question, proceeds to (2) a hypothetical explanation of that problem, and then continues on to (3) the collection of data. If a case that is inconsistent with the hypothesis is encountered, it requires (4) either to redefine the hypothesis so as to exclude the deviant or negative case or to reformulate the hypothesis and proceed with further collection (Bryman, 2008: 539). Application of small-N designs is required here due to the lack of depth in knowing which variables matter the most and how they are causally related. Many authors applied this method to carry out explorative studies (Birkinshaw, Brannen, & Tung, 2011; Doz, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989; Ghauri, 2004; Malnight, 2001). This type of qualitative research further substantiated in the words of Doz (2011: 588), "qualitative research methods offer the opportunity to help move the field forward and assist in providing its own theoretical grounding".

As the first step in the mentioned strategy of analytic induction, we

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the book *Gempei Josuiki*, a Record of the Gempei War in 1247 (Mottainai Wikipedia, 2012).

have looked at a dimension of traditional Japanese ethics on pre-consumption as well as post-consumption, referring to the term of *mottainai* which seems to have two different meanings; "what a waste!" and "more than one deserves!". To some extent, the behaviour on the *mottainai* ethics results from a dimension of the envy-avoidance mechanism in which successful people would rather not get too rich (would abstain from buying luxurious goods) by the fear that they will be too envied. On the other hand, traditionally, the behaviour of *mottainai* was more related to Japanese subjective ideals or belief in the Buddha's teaching for training oneself (*kokki*) to have religious enlightenment. We have noted this *unique* feature of Japanese ethics on consumption.

As the second step, we raised a hypothetical explanation such that there exists a perception gap in each subjective ideal for restraining from wasteful expenditures between India and Japan, which may discourage the Japanese firms to invest more in India. At the third step, we choose the process of the collection of data through relatively unstructured interviews with three Japanese expatriates who manage joint-ventures in India. Basically we raise a single question; under what occasions do you (Japanese) feel *mottainai* in managing the business operation in India or in supervising Indian staffs? The interviewees are the CEO and CFO of their joint-venture firms, presumably having a confidentiality obligation. The method of relatively unstructured interview allows them to respond freely at their discretion, with the interviewer simply responding to the points that seem worthy of being followed up (see Bryman, 2008: 438). As the fourth step, we examine this case, and, if necessary, redefine the hypothesis so as to exclude the deviant or negative case or reformulate the hypothesis and proceed with further research. This is in line with the explanation as given by Dyer and Wilkins (1991: 617):"*if executed well, it can be extremely powerful (when) authors have described general phenomenon so well that others have little difficulty seeing the same phenomenon in their own experience and research. We turn to classics because they are good stories, not because they are merely clear statements of a construct"*.

We conducted face-to-face interviews with three Japanese expatriates who manage joint-ventures in India. The interviews were held in Gurgaon, India on the 23rd and 24th of August, 2014. We raised a single question; under what occasions do you feel *mottainai* in managing the business operation in India or in supervising Indian staffs? The following Box 1 pre-

sents their perspectives on this question in random order. We have given emphasis on important aspects explaining our hypothesis by underlining them.

Box 1: Japanese expatriates' comments

[Expatriate 1] "... In general, the Indian people are less concerned about the quality of 'process' (for the production), so far as a certain level of quality of outcomes is achieved. In my view, this is 'mottainai' (if they were more concerned about the quality of process, then, the quality of products would have been better) (c). ... We have invested handsome amount in 'quality control', but it brought a very limited effect (e). ... A Japanese manufacturer tried to introduce a guideline of letting all the (Indian) workers in their factory put on 'helmets' (This guideline is applied in Japan). I heard that the manufacturer needed no less than 3 years to enforce this simple practice! Another Japanese manufacturer tried to introduce 'radio gymnastic exercises' before starting the factory operation (These exercises are commonly done in many factories in Japan), but it did not become entrenched in the Indian workers (e). ..."

[Expatriate 1] "... Indian firms tend to cover up the inefficiency or problem in the production process when the fabrication yield rate is deteriorating. The habitude of this kind was observed also in many Japanese firms in the 1970s. I am not sure how Indian firms will be changing in accordance with further development, but I am afraid that Indian people themselves would not change (e) irrespective of any development stage. ... Since the most advanced production lines are already installed, the quality of the Indian factories has reached a considerably high level. However, they need to manage hygiene. As a whole, it is very difficult to promote better hygiene because the Indian workers' mindset would not change (e). ... More Japanese may invest in India to penetrate into vast domestic markets, however, it seems that India would not become 'the factory of the world' as China did, though I do not understand the reason why I feel that India would not change (e). ..."

[Expatriate 1] "... There are so many brilliant Indians being engaged in the specialist functions (such as accountants) and management jobs. On the other hand, I am sometimes appalled to see the gap and disparities between the rich and the poor (d). ..."

[Expatriate 2] "... General inefficiency is mainly due to the existence of many underutilized workers. There are wasteful allocations of workers(a), for instance, at many security-check points in public accommodations. Generally where there is a requirement of only 1 or 2 staffs for the check, no less than 5 to 6 staffs are engaged at every point. In another instance, there are elevator attendants who are in charge of pushing the elevator button, whose work seems really wasteful. However, if they pursue the efficiency in human resource allocation, the number of jobless workers would be increased, possibly causing a social instability (b). ..."

[Expatriate 3] "... I would rather not see those underutilized workers, the allocation of whom seems really wasteful (mottainai) (a). But probably there is no choice except to maintain the status quo(b) because India is one of the world's most populous countries. ... "

[Expatriate 1] "... India is rich in diversity. It is not easy to grasp India as one unit. It appears that the rich class in Delhi enjoys conspicuous consumption. One of my Indian junior staffs in management drives an AUDI, a more luxurious car than the one I ride. On the other hand, I hear that even the richer class in Gujarat shares the virtue of thrift (d). In general, the salary gap between the director class and the worker class is very wide in India. However, the salary level of the director class in Gujarat firms is modest. In this sense, Gujarat firms and business persons look more like Japanese '*Omi*' merchants (d)3) . ..."

[Expatriate 2] "... Managing Indian staffs, frankly speaking, is 'tough and tiring'. They are basically obedient to their boss. However, at the end of it, they would not change the way they do business and work (e),

3) the merchants in the *Omi* area of old Japan are famous as shrewd merchants but they respect the virtue of thrift as well as the virtue of charity and redistribution in the society

even though I (as CEO) explained and asked again and again what I wished them to change. ... I am afraid that Indian people do not at all intend to learn from the Japanese way or methods even though these methods are successful. ..."

Analysis and Discussion

First of all, we summarize that all the interviewees raised 'overstaffing' generally observed in Delhi as an example of *mottainai* (see the sentence [(a)]). They appeared to feel *mottainai* on the overstaffing, meaning "Oh, what a waste!". Probably, those people from the egalitarian society feel uneasy to see the situation which leaves the wasteful allocation of human resources unsolved. There is no choice left but to accept the situation as it is. They may feel powerless and frustrated while casting a wistful glance at the overstaffing (see the sentence [(b)]). Secondly, we are interested in the sentence [(c)] which seems to suggest the other meaning of *mottainai* as "more than one deserves". The interviewee thinks of the Indian firms which do not pay sufficient attention to fully utilize the capacity (or the potentiality) as *mottainai*.

Thirdly, we are interested in that an interviewee would rather not favourably consider excess inequality and conspicuous consumption in the richer class. Their favourable impression on modest firms and business persons in Gujarat may endorse the preference (see the sentence [(d)]). Fourth, we are interested in that all the interviewees seem to be frustrated by the Indian attitude of keeping their way of business and work unchanged, at least, from the Japanese perspective (see the sentence [(e)]).

We recall that the behaviour of *mottainai* was related to their subjective ideals or belief in the Buddha's teaching for training themselves (*kokki*). Still, many Japanese are more or less concerned, not only to improve physical environment but also to train themselves for making the quality of life better, and to enhance and ennoble themselves in an endless stream for their self-realization. This *kokki* training is sought even in their business life. Many Japanese think of business and working as a challenge to enhance and ennoble themselves. In contrast, the Indian might be less concerned to train themselves for the quality of life, at least, in their business and working. Probably, the Indians are concerned to enhance themselves in the other dimensions of life, such as life with family or relatives and social activities in communities. Of course, some Indians are con-

cerned to seek higher qualifications or degrees to get a responsible post. But, seemingly, they are less concerned to train and enhance themselves for the quality of life, in other words, less concerned to ennoble themselves to deserve an object or resource in order not to be blamed as *mottainai*. From the Japanese perspective of respecting the virtue of training themselves (*kokki*), it would be somehow frustrating to work together with the Indian people who pay least efforts to enhance the way of business, because enhancing the way of business is related to the *kokki* training for some of the Japanese.

As is mentioned by an interviewee, India is rich in diversity. Therefore, it is not easy to generalize the tendency of Indian people as a whole. At the same time, as is mentioned earlier, the recent trend in encouraging Japanese people to quantify the objective, at least, *objectifiable* value of all the goods and services so that they may not pay more than the value they consume - the so-called '*financialization*' - has unwisely changed the criteria for *mottainai* in the Japanese people. It is not easy to generalize a tendency of the Japanese people, either. However, through the examination of the interviews, we can draw a perception gap in subjective ideals for restraining wasteful resource allocation and opportunity losses between India and Japan. From the above analysis and discussion we entail further exploration with a bigger sample to test the hypothesis of cultural distance between two societies as a potential mutual barrier of mindset.

5. Concluding comments

Some sociologists note that the work organization within Indian factories is extremely hierarchical, and this is not unrelated to the low productivity of Indian firms even in simple production processes compared to other countries. Further the social distance and distrust between managers and workers undermine the cooperation that is needed for innovations that characterize more productive workplaces. Bardhan (n.a.) points out that social mobility may be particularly low in India, partly because of the deadening legacy of the system of caste oppression and discrimination in India. Bardhan (n.a.) also points out the reason behind the wasteful allocation of human resources and says: "unlike in China and Vietnam where the initial growth spurt has been in labour intensive industries, in India the success stories so far have been largely in skill intensive (software,

business processing, pharmaceuticals) or capital-intensive (machine tools, vehicles and car parts) sectors, and as a result the high economic growth has not resulted in a large expansion of job prospects for poor unskilled workers".

What holds the Japanese firms back? As is mentioned by Indian economists and sociologists, there must exist specific internal factors in India not to attract foreign direct investment. Besides, many researchers and practitioners refer to the cultural or perception gap between the two societies as a reason why Japanese still hesitate to come to India. We attempt to investigate the specificities of the gap by shedding light on the hypothesis that there exists a perception gap in each subjective ideals for restraining from wasteful expenditures between India and Japan, which may discourage the Japanese firms to invest in India. We have to admit that it is too early to judge whether our hypothesis can be rejected or not. Since India is a diverse country, it is intrinsically difficult to generalize any tendency from the examination of the limited number of interviews. Our challenge is to investigate the specificities of the perception gap between India and Japan. The challenge, we believe, would contribute to filling the gap.

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